1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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by the use of other substantives to indicate the nature of a particular tablet (*kohau o te ranga, kohau o te pure*).

As already mentioned (p. 137), the chants associated with the tablets were recited by learned men or bards called *tangata rongorongo*. Reading of the tablets or chanting from them was taught in special huts, comparable to the schools of learning (*whare wananga*) of the Maori. At Te Hare-titaha in Anakena I was shown stone curbs which were supposed to be remains of the most famous school for *rongorongo* men. There were similar houses in other districts. The atmosphere and the methods in these houses of learning were described by some informants on the authority of old men now dead. Unfortunately these traditions are colored by details of the missionary school system:

> The school houses were open sheds with thatched roofs. In the morning the children waited outside the house until they were told by the teacher to enter. To the teacher's salute of *maira* they answered *kokoea*. Each student knelt before a flat stone (*maea rango*), which served as a writing desk. The assistant instructor (*te pahu*) counted the children to find out whether any were missing. The teacher started the lesson by reciting a prayer from a tablet. Then the children were taught to make string figures, each of which was associated with a chant that they must memorize. There were chants for love, for the dead, for saving people from dying, for addressing noblemen, and for the multiplication of birds and fish.
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> Banana leaves were used as copy books and on them the pupils practiced the engraving of signs with a sharp bone from the frigate bird (*makohe*). Te Haha said the copy books were sheaths from the banana trunk (194, p. 214).
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> According to Routledge, Te Haha was taught by King Nga-ara, but Charli Teao, the nephew of Te Haha, told me that his uncle had been trained by Taki, another uncle of Charli. Taki had been taught by Ngangiriva. Te Haha described King Nga-ara as "holding a tablet in one hand and swaying from side to side as he recited. Besides giving instruction, he inspected the candidates prepared by other professors, who were generally their own sons; he looked at their *kohau* and made them read, on which he either passed them, clapping if they did well, or turned them back. Their sponsors were made personally responsible. If the pupils acquitted themselves creditably, presents of *kohau* were made to the teachers; if the youth failed, the tablets of the instructor were taken away" (194, p. 245).

Besides the annual gathering and chanting by *rongorongo* men at Orongo during the feast of the bird-man, these learned bards met once a year at Anakena to chant for the king. People came from all over the island to hear them "read" from the tablets. This public "reading" must be considered as a general contest between *rongorongo* men and a test of the ability of each. Visitors arrived with *huhu* (sticks with feathers) to which turmeric was tied, as a courtesy to the king. The food to be consumed during the feast was supplied by the king, who was aided by people of neighboring districts. Te Haha described to Routledge (194, pp. 245-246) one such gathering, which he attended in his youth:

> Both King Nga-ara and his son, Kaimako . . . sat on seats made of tablets, and each had a tablet in his hand; they wore feather hats, as did all the professors. The